

YOUTH AND RELIGION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COUNTERCULTURE [2]

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I. RESTATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

In continuing a study (Bachika, 1982) of the various movements of the counterculture that had their heyday in the early 1970s in the Western United States, it will be convenient on this occasion to summarize the previous discussion. The main part of the previous article was devoted to a review of some ethnographic materials and a few evaluations of the newly arisen movements in order to come to grips with the various manifestations of the counterculture, especially the involvement of a considerable number of youth with religion. The earlier perspective was that of the macro-social aspects of the issue, while this time the focus will be on the youth concerned, or in other words, on the micro-social level.

Let us, then, review the main points of the previous paper, trying at the same time to arrive at more clear-cut formulations of the problems.

1. *The Socio-cultural Analysis of the Counterculture*

An authoritative interpretation of the macro-social level of the counterculture can be found in C. Y. Glock and R. N. Bellah (1976). Skipping some differences concerning details, both authors saw the counterculture as an outcome of the particular development of American culture or as a highly visible sign of its change, the general manifestation of the counterculture being "the all-encompassing character of protest against the major institutions of conventional society and a widespread experimentation with alternatives" (Glock-Bellah, 1976, 333-34, 355). Both authors also stated in similar terms that the balance of the two dominant currents of American culture was being altered; biblical religion was losing against utilitarian individualism, leaving the former unable to provide a meaningful pattern of personal and social existence. Apart from various social and cultural changes, Glock elaborated upon the point that the social sciences especially had been instrumental in undermining the old world view by putting man instead of God in the center of the human scene, resulting in uncertainty concerning a definite, meaningful course of action. In other words, man had come to be seen as the product of various biological, psychological, and social forces, and this raised more questions about man and his truth than it solved. The overall significance of the counterculture, they said, lay in the fact that it was a crisis of meaning, further interpreted by Bellah as a religious crisis.

The necessity of a socio-cultural analysis is beyond doubt, because man is a product of society, as also can be understood from socialization theory. Stated

simply, primary socialization, starting at birth, is from the very beginning an absorption of the social life world of the larger society. The growing child becomes a member of his society by internalizing the given social reality. "Secondary socialization is any subsequent process that inducts an already socialized individual into new sectors of the objective world of his society" (Berger-Luckmann, 1967, 130).

Of course, socialization is not a straight jacket put on the individual's shoulders. Socialization gradually takes on a personal touch because of the emergence of an autonomously thinking self, while also differentiation takes place, because individuals are exposed to different social situations, and because they take part in differing activities, possibly internalizing different roles in different ways. Consequently, the question cannot be avoided, neither from the empirical nor from the theoretical point of view, as to why certain youth were very much involved in the counterculture and others much less or only minimally so. Thus, it will be necessary to consider the problem of the counterculture from the vantage point of individual persons also, an undertaking which was beyond the scope of Glock and Bellah's cultural analysis. In other words, besides the so-called objective factors of socio-cultural change, it is necessary to consider the subjective conditions which lead to countercultural behavior.

This question, at first sight, seems to boil down to individual and collective motivations. Apparently very relevant to the inquiry into motivations is Glock's earlier argumentation concerning feelings of deprivation. Glock (1973) argued that shared deprivation, though not a causal factor in itself, is a situation that breeds personal and social discontent, and as such, constitutes a precondition that indirectly leads to reformatory or revolutionary movements in either the secular or the religious sphere. Glock distinguished economic, social, organismic, ethical, and psychological forms of deprivation. Based on these considerations, it was argued by Petersen and Mauss (1973) that most of these types of deprivation could be found in the psychological dispositions of the Jesus People, a specific category of countercultural youth. Since youth of similar characteristics participated in the other movements, too, I subsequently argued that several kinds of deprivation were present in most of the young who rejected the established society, and that these types of deprivation therefore should not be seen as factors of explanation but rather as the problem situation itself that must be explained. In other words, why did some youth experience deprivation, or more precisely, why were some youth not motivated to assume roles in the

established society? This negative formulation seems methodologically more correct, as will be seen later, and personally more fair to the youth in question, who did not necessarily see themselves as alienated people.

Returning once more to the socio-cultural situation, two aspects were not much touched upon by Glock and Bellah; one was the religious situation of the period concerned, and another the pluralistic religious situation of the United States, except that much attention was paid to the impact of Eastern religions. Therefore, I felt the need to stress the consequence of the relative decline in religious practice, as was partly done by P. Wuthnow (1978, 117-23). Experimentation with religion and other orientations of the mind are apt to occur in places and times of religious void, though this in itself is not a sufficient condition for aspiration toward new religious movements. Loss of faith may not be a severe crisis because the human identity can find its stabilizing element also in non-religious orientations (Bachika, 1980). (This consideration underscores the view that the counterculture was more than a religious crisis.) Also, I put some emphasis on the pluralistic trends in the religio-cultural scene in the United States, which may account for the variety of the new religious movements, a variety much greater than that found in other countries.

2. *Comparison and Classification of the New Religious Movements*

While many descriptions and analyses of the new religious movements have been done, as far as I know, comparative studies have not yet been attempted.⁽¹⁾ I therefore made comparison a partial aim of my secondary study and tried to construct a typology of the religious orientations of some prominent movements. For that purpose I used M. G. McGuire's (1980) conceptualization of sect and cult, to which I added further considerations about the extent to which the various groups appeared to be countercultural. Not only is the degree to which reactions are countercultural important as a criterion of classification, it also seems crucial to the understanding of the expansion of the various movements.

An important caveat about attempted typifications of the groups is that they should be seen as descriptive rather than substantial because of the developmental nature of the various movements and also because of non-uniformity in ways of participating to be found within at least some of the groups.

The typifications are as follows.⁽²⁾

(1) The Hare Krishna Society. This group may be characterized as a sectarian religious organization that stimulates sectarian, mystic, religious attitudes. It seems to be highest in degree of counterculturalness, especially because of its exoteric religious life style and exoteric religious practices, and also because of the hippie background of many of its devotees as well as its futuristic vision of a new age.

(2) The Divine Light Mission. DLM figures as a cult because of its universalistic tendency but fosters sectarian religious attitudes especially among its ashram residents. DLM also can be thought to rate high on the scale of countercultural reaction because of the remaining awareness of its foreign origin, its foreign gurus, and the radical character of its religious goal. However, it is less countercultural than Hare Krishna, because its main religious practice is meditation and group discussion, both of which are more readily accepted in American society. The life style of its devotees also conforms more closely to the American way of life.

(3) The Healthy-Happy-Holy Organization (3HO). This organization appears to be a typical cult because of its official intention of being an educational association rather than a religious one, and also because its main practices consist of yoga exercises, which are not specifically religious. However, religion according to the Sikh faith is deemed important in 3HO; it nevertheless seems to be cultic in orientation, as is suggested by its very simple ritual. The countercultural tendency of 3HO derives from its foreign origin, its foreign leader and a certain—not very insistant—concern for keeping to the Sikh style of life.

(4) The Christian World Liberation Front (CWLF). This is one movement within the category of Jesus People. It can be considered to be mildly sectarian, in that the adherents envision Jesus as the radical alternative and total inspiration for their daily lives. But they are a typical movement, because they seem to aim more at reconversion of Christians, who later eventually can more easily take up their responsibilities in society. If they can be considered to be countercultural, it is because they attract street people and political radicals, who on conversion, do not identify with the conventional churches.

(5) Synanon. This is an organization started for the rehabilitation of drug addicts that later took the direction of an alternative society for life. It cannot be considered to be a religious movement, but it is an organization closely related to the counterculture. It can be seen as having countercultural inclinations, because it appears to have grown in marginality, espousing values dif-

ferent from those of the larger society.

(6) The Human Potential Movements. These are typical movements, having not members but rather clients. In general they are not or are only minimally countercultural, because, even if they take in exoteric knowledge, their non-religious and often fashionable character is easily accepted.

(7) The Catholic Charismatic Movement. CCM is a renewal movement within the church, involving mainly middle-class, middle-aged people, and as such, can be thought to be least countercultural in comparison with the other movements. However, its religious practice is unusual and may share in the sectarian inclination of the church.

In reviewing the above groups, I have tried to rank them in order of decreasing countercultural tendency. The countercultural character, in general, would derive from the presence of exoteric-cultural elements or values. The degree of counterculturalness would depend on the extent to which those foreign elements are not generally accepted in the society concerned, while also sectarianism, a religious orientation asserting unique legitimacy, would increase that degree. In contrast, a cultic or pluralistic religious orientation, and especially non-religious orientations, tend to cause less resentment and thus have greater chances of being more attractive to the general population.

This conclusion seems corroborated by survey data concerning the same or similar movements. Looking at these data (see Table 1), we see that the combined number of those who are strongly or mildly attracted by these movements is smallest for the most countercultural and sectarian Hare Krishna (13%) and for groups that speak in tongues (25%), followed by CWLF (35%), which also shows a sectarian tendency. All of the others are above 40%. On the other hand, the difference in countercultural character is manifested in the percentages of strong attraction to Hare Krishna and Tongues. They are 10% for the latter but only 1% for the former. The same difference is still more in evidence in the percentages of participation in these two movements: only 4% for Hare Krishna but 23% for Tongues. It can be added that this high percentage of participation in Tongues compares favorably with the highest percentage in est (24%), and the third highest for yoga (16%), thus confirming our general conclusion that those movements are most attractive that are least countercultural.

Unfortunately, similar data on DLM and 3HO are not available, but they presumably would get similar reactions as Hare Krishna did because of their

similarly high degree of countercultural character. On the other hand, the combined number of people strongly and mildly attracted to quasi-religious and non-religious movements such as yoga, Synanon, and est is much higher (43, 47, and 54% respectively), and resentment against them much lower (10, 23, and 16% respectively). The high percentage of those turned off by groups that speak in tongues (40%) probably is due to the unconventional nature of this religious practice and the possible sectarian tendency of such groups.

Let us now proceed to a restatement of our thesis concerning these differential relationships.

3. *Thesis Concerning the Differential Relationship of Youth and the Counterculture*

I would like to take up feelings of alienation of a part of the White middle-class youth as the core of the counterculture. I would like to see their origin and interpret their outcome as follows. (1) Youth in general are more susceptible to cultural change and act more readily according to the mood of the times. Also, some youth may be more attracted to cultural goals than to economic ones, especially because of the growing influence of the cultural sphere (P. Bell, 1976). (2) The fact that mainly White middle-class youth were involved in the counterculture may be related to the severe competition within this class in the domain of higher education. While relative affluence was their privilege, in order to be successful in realizing any goal, cultural or economic, or in more general terms, to succeed in upward mobility requires a great deal of effort and determination, which becomes increasingly more difficult with worsening economic conditions, especially so during an era of social unrest and cultural fermentation. (3) It seems reasonable to assume that the counterculture was at heart a religious crisis, because experimentation with religion was one of its characteristics or one of its consequences, in spite of the fact that the hippie population as well as the participants in communes etc., were most numerous in the more unchurched areas of the United States. However, I would rather argue for the opinion that loss of social meaning, or alienation from society, would have more explanatory value with respect to countercultural behavior, because loss of social meaning is more severe than loss of religious faith, the latter, once again, not being a requisite for a stable identity.

II. INQUIRY INTO THE SUBJECTIVE CONDITIONS OF THE COUNTERCULTURE

1. *Some Related Problems*

Before beginning the actual inquiry into the subjective conditions of the counterculture, it will be salutary to look into some problems related to our method and the nature of the subject matter. The major difficulty may be located in our conceptual and hypothetical approach in the absence of sure methodological foundations. However, the first goal of any research must be to ask the right questions concerning the issue rather than to look for a solution from the start. A conceptual approach will not be inappropriate for such an objective.⁽³⁾

For our purposes at the moment, we can say that countercultural youth have experimented with social reality and new ways of social existence. A concrete difficulty, then, is the great variety of experimentation that has been going on, certainly not all of which can be touched upon. We propose to take up only the most extreme forms of countercultural behavior.

Further, there are undeniable relations between the troubles of youth and social institutions, especially the family and schools, because both the family and schools are supposed to exert considerable influence in the course of primary and secondary socialization. Also, the way in which the adults affiliated with these institutions cope with problems as they arise must be consequential. However, in spite of the interconnectedness of social institutions and the troubles of youth, it seems questionable to attribute the primary causes or a predominant influence to the concrete social institutions in the case of countercultural behavior, which is different from other deviance.

Empirical indications for not holding the social institutions responsible in the first place for the troubles of youth are suggested by studies of the psychological problems of adolescents. Thus M. Rutter, reviewing the results of much recent research in this field, observes: "The overall conclusion must be that although young people's leisure activities with their peers increase during adolescence and although their shared activities with their parents decrease, nevertheless in the great majority of cases parent-adolescent relationships remain generally harmonious, communication between the generations continues and young people tend both to share their parents' values on the major issues of life and also to turn to them for guidance on the most major concerns. The concept of parent-child

alienation as a usual feature of adolescence is a myth." (Rutter, 1980, 31).

Concerning the relationship of schools to the problems of youth, the author shows more caution (Rutter, 1980, 116-17, 144). Much progress has been made, because the general level of education in the population as a whole has risen considerably compared with earlier generations, but recently there are more dropouts and failures than earlier. Also, continuing with their education seems to have become less attractive to some young people. Similarly, the author's answer is not plain and simple concerning the question whether juvenile delinquency is increasing (Rutter, 1980, 129-30). He admits that there is a definite increase in acts of delinquent behavior, but he shows that this increase is not necessarily an increase in serious acts of delinquency, nor in delinquent-prone individuals. The actual increase in delinquency may be due to increasing crime opportunities.

Theoretically, then, thinking in terms of direct causes in the case of individual identity formation and its problems must be considered suspect. On the one hand, too many variables are at work that also help to shape and change the social institutions: growing urbanization, the population explosion, the spread of higher education, the expansion of the mass media, change in work and leisure activities, change in the religious situation, etc. On the other hand, the formation of individual identities is essentially a process proceeding dialectically, defying the simple concept of cause and effect. We would rather see the social institutions as the representing agencies of the larger society.

Another theoretical consideration concerns the nature of understanding itself. Because it is humanly unsatisfactory and intellectually even unbearable to have no explanation for unusual behavior or events, any explanation may seem better than its mere absence. The more easily will a plausible if partial explanation be accepted, such as, in Schutzian terms, the clarification of the "because-motives" even if the "in-order-to motives" remain a mystery. Here, because-motives refer to the agent's past and to the influences of his environment. Even when these connections are made understandable, it seems that we still do not comprehend a person's in-order-to motives, or, why he or she wanted to engage in such and such behavior. To understand this subjective dimension, it seems necessary to recognize the relations of the particular identities to the social reality. It seems especially necessary to see how people interact with the social reality they are located in. One could try to reconstruct, in an ideal type fashion, the socialization process that eventuated in countercultural behavior, but the analysis I

would like to try presently involves proceeding in the reverse order, describing first what can be considered to be the end product: countercultural behavior or countercultural identities, and delineating the constitutive elements of that behavior or those identities. Next would come the discussion of the *primary* aspects of the particular subjective conditions of the counterculture.

An interesting intermediary analysis, in which both objective and subjective conditions are taken into account, was done by R. Wuthnow (1978). This I would like to review as the next step in the present study.

2. *An Intermediary Analysis*

Wuthnow, who set out to investigate the social and cultural conditions that have facilitated the new religious movements, argues that these new movements in the context of the counterculture can be seen as cultural innovations (Wuthnow, 1978, 15-43). The conditions that according to Wuthnow are instrumental in the adoption of innovations can be simply summarized as follows: people must know, be open to, have occasion to come into contact with, and feel motivated to join in experimentation. More concisely, exposure, legitimacy, opportunity, and motivation are the four preconditions for the success of new movements.

Wuthnow investigates this hypothesis by examining the characteristics of the people in the San Francisco Bay Area who participated in Zen, TM and Yoga groups. In some detail, he hypothesizes that these movements have gained greater popularity with the better informed sections of the population, a situation in which he acknowledges the function of higher education and also the expansion of the communication media. Concerning exposure, then, he concludes that "The results [of the survey] indicate that the Eastern religious experimenter tends to be better educated, from a better educated background and more intellectually sophisticated than the average person in the Bay Area, and that the more one has of these characteristics, the more likely he is to be attracted to Eastern religions and to have participated in them." (Wuthnow, 1978, 23)

Legitimacy for the new religious movements would derive from the cultural milieu that provides supportive values for cultural innovation. It is generally known that during the 1960s the idea of experimentation and also tolerance became values in themselves. Wuthnow's survey data show that the people who felt attracted toward the new religious movements were also the people who were more tolerant toward the non-conventional in matters of politics, sexual

mores, and the use of marihuana.

The opportunity to experiment refers more to psychological dispositions than to merely having free time and being relatively affluent. The inclination to experiment is found in particular in people who seem to be less constrained by the conventional expectations deriving from home, job and community, and who, therefore, tend to be marginal. Concretely, these conditions apply above all to the young, the single, and the geographically mobile, as is shown by the information in the survey data: persons with these characteristics are much more numerous among the participants in the new religious movements than the other people in the sample.

By motivation Wuthnow understands the degree of stress or deprivation people experience in life, the main problem areas being related to loss of meaningfulness or purpose in life, the problems related to sex, and those related to stress deriving from the difficulties involved in procuring a living (work and money problems). The more problems people face, the higher their degree of stress, and the more likely they are to be attracted by, or to participate in new religious movements.

Concerning these four kinds of cultural and social conditions, Wuthnow has been able to show not only their independent relations to experimentation with Eastern religions but also the cumulative effect of these variables; evidence of this combined impact need not be given for our present purposes. It will be sufficient if we have indicated the general purport of Wuthnow's analysis.

In the above review, we saw that it was not Wuthnow's aim to examine why some individuals decided to join one movement rather than another but rather to account for the success of the new religious movements as a kind of cultural innovation. As a result, he was able to demonstrate that religious experimentation was frequent in those parts of society that showed the above characteristics, while it was virtually absent in other parts. Thus, it can be said that Wuthnow intentionally concerned himself more with the macro-social level but that he made close connections with the subjective conditions of individual identities. More precisely, only the first two conditions he analyses were socio-cultural conditions: very summarily, (a) the expansion of higher education and, (b) change in the value system, which are not independent of each other. Actually, Wuthnow considers these two conditions in combination, thus constructing a single index he refers to as the Cultural Availability Index (Wuthnow, 1978, 33-4, 40-1). The two other conditions in fact are subjective

conditions or characteristics existing in people, relating, (a) to their personal and social status (being young in age, single, and geographically mobile), and (b) to their mental dispositions, i. e., feelings of stress and deprivation.

Wuthnow's hypothesis seems corroborated, but in it he is only concerned with very mild forms of countercultural behavior, which indeed can be seen as cultural innovation. He also duly acknowledges that different motivations may be expected in the case of people who join other movements. Certainly, extreme forms of countercultural behavior cannot be seen as a kind of innovation, and will therefore require a different treatment, for which it seems imperative to concentrate mainly on the subjective conditions.

3. *Extreme Forms of Countercultural Behavior*

In this section we will review two accounts of extreme countercultural behavior, which we will see as the end result that has to be examined, as proposed before. One description is of a hippie group in England and another of a group of forty or so people with a hippie background who emerged out of the drug subculture as a Hindu religious group, started in 1967 and pseudonymously called the Church of the Cosmic Liberty. We will start with the latter about which we have a monograph by J. Damrell, (1978, 9-136).

Damrell's general goal was to observe and describe in a phenomenological fashion how this group managed to improvise a life style of its own and how it related to the youth culture of which it was a part.

The author begins his account by presenting short biographies of ten members from the so-called inner circle and of eight others who met less regularly. They are men and women, some married and some not, with an average age of 25 at the initial stage of the group's existence. Being biographical notes, these descriptions are not the result of systematic interviews but of participant observation; they nevertheless present a consistent image, especially of the ten core members, which seems important for the understanding of countercultural behavior. Their most common characteristic is their involvement in the drug culture, which is explicitly mentioned for nine persons out of ten, six of whom have been arrested one or more times for drug dealing. Important also is their hippie or bohemian style of life, mentioned for six of the core members. And six of the same group of ten had some training or practical interest in the arts; two of them had also musical skills. Further, two had an academic degree (one, a man, in the humanities, and another, a woman, in political science),

while three others had at least some college education. The people, who were not personally named, were said to have similar backgrounds.

As a matter of principle, none of the core members had a regular job, but they did part time work in order to sustain themselves and the group. They met on a daily basis at the apartment of one of the leaders, which served them as a church and a sacred place as can be judged from abundant religious objects and decorations: an Indian shrine with incense burner and candlesticks, many religious posters, pictures, and images of Hindu gods and saints as well as of Christ and the Buddha.

Everyday life for the Cosmic Libertarians consisted of unorganized but recurrent religious and secular activities. After the morning prayer, meditation and breakfast at home, the members arrived at the church at around 9:00 a. m. There they continued their meditation collectively, worshipped with songs and prayers, read the scriptures and held discussions on religious topics, their church affairs, and especially on their spiritual progress. Secular activities, such as preparing for the meals, other household chores and eating itself, all were done in a religious atmosphere. Regularly, but according to the mood of the time, a special day was decided upon when silence, or worship, or fasting, or feasting became the main ingredient of a program with more and longer religious practices.

While being very religiously minded and making serious efforts toward progress in Hindu consciousness according to the spirituality of Sri Ramakrishna, they gradually changed from drug dealers/users to quasi-religious virtuosi, accepting an Indian guru as their spiritual leader. The emphasis in their religious life was on spontaneity and free religious expression. However, not intentionally but as a natural result of their former hippie existence, their spiritual quest was relativized by reverting to hippie roles, usually when in contact with outsiders, but occasionally also with one another. This is best illustrated by their activities of "rapping" and "hustling" (Wuthnow, 1978, 129-32). Rapping refers mainly to secular conversation while hustling is a kind of rapping with utilitarian aims, for example, when trying to recruit new members or to obtain gifts and funds for the group. For such goals, secular language was deemed more effective than religious parlance. Also revealing their hippie attitudes was their initially continued use of marihuana, their general use of hippie language and expressions, and, last but not least, the frequently mentioned rejection of the middle-class work ethic by refusing to take a regular job (Damrell, 1978, 51, 74, 93, 96-7).

For our second picture of countercultural behavior we rely on P. Willis's description and interpretation of hippie scenes in England (Willis, 1978, 85-114, 125-52).

In overview, hippies are seen by Willis as young people who, in opposition to a materialistic and rationalistic society, acted out a continuous attempt at the realization of a more humane life, without, however, achieving success. In more detail, he saw the hippie identity as characterized by personal insecurity, an uncertain state of life that they themselves considered to be the normal situation. They believed, in words and thoughts, in the possibility of reaching greater spiritual fulfillment or fuller states of awareness, but they were at the same time resigned to the actual impossibility of reaching such aims, except through drugs. The author observes: "The living out of an idea [without the intended results] was in its own way heroic," but he evaluates that endeavor as "the essentially bottomless and contradictory nature of the hippie solution" (Willis, 1978, 89).

Further, according to Willis, constitutive of the hippie identity and determining their relationship to society was the fact that they insisted on the importance of subjective experience and of living in the present. This double need could not but result in the rejection of many conventional attitudes such as punctuality and reliability, making carelessness and acting on impulse the rule. Promises and plans could not count for much. Still more serious, conventional morality and 'straight' values were mocked, while even common logic was cast aside when coming in contact with the denizens of the established society. With people of their own kind, however, openness, personal authenticity and friendliness were important social values, even if these attitudes did not generate strong personal or social bonds. Personal relationships could be terminated overnight without much concern on either side.

It may be said that the rejection of society in general was both the intention and the result of their behavior. A telltale example of this attitude toward society was their repudiation of television on the grounds that it is an instrument of brainwashing. The most radical minds rejected society as paranoid and as a degenerated form of human existence. If they identified with anyone, it was with the underprivileged like the American Indians and social outcasts like prostitutes.

Another trait of the hippie culture, characterizing the hippie consciousness, was, as is widely known, the use of drugs. Drugs were important to the hippies

not only because they constituted the single means for enhancing and enlarging subjective experience, also because they were a major conversation topic, about which they accumulated a considerable amount of knowledge, relating to the various substances, the ways of using them and their effects.

Again, very characteristic of the hippies was their interest in, and knowledge of pop music. Writes Willis: "In sheer quantitative terms, there was a massive interaction between a certain kind of pop music and the hippy culture. It is hard to conceive of the hippy without linking him to a certain kind of 'progressive' pop music" (Willis, 1979, 153). That is to say, progressive or underground music, sometimes also called hard rock or 'acid' rock, can be considered to be both a product of the counterculture and one of its constitutive elements, expressing and expanding that culture. The principal qualities that appealed to the hippies were its originality and creativity. Listening to this music was not for the sake of diversion but for experiencing it, getting into it, for being taken over by its overpowering sounds. Its originality and creativity derived from the song words that expressed hippie consciousness and also from its musical form of asymmetric rhythm and unusual sound effects. Both content and form made this music "rich in ambiguity" (Willis, 1978, 160), ie., able to suggest many meanings, including criticism or mockery of conventional society, or it could also convey the impression of transcendence. It was music "only they could appreciate. This was doubly satisfying because it outraged society, as well as containing and protecting their innermost concerns" (Willis, 1979, 160).

Comparing these two examples of countercultural behavior, it can be said that the similarities in conduct and identity are much more striking than the differences that existed between the hippies in England and the countercultural group called the Cosmic Libertarians. Both groups were attracted to spiritual and cultural goals, the former being more or less individually and secularly oriented, while the latter became organized and religiously oriented. The common hippie involvement with drugs and interest in music existed also in the American group, several members of which, as we saw, showed also artistic abilities. It is interesting to learn that, after several years, the few remaining members of the latter group emerged as the owners and operators of a record company, and then no longer called themselves a 'church' (Damrell, 1978, 227). Finally, similar also are their attitudes toward a materialistic and rationalistic society, both in their praxis and their ways of thinking.

4. *Exploratory Analysis of Extreme Countercultural Behavior*

Having outlined some forms of extreme countercultural behavior, we have now to proceed to its analysis, which is intended to be exploratory and hypothetical. Let us first narrow the focus of the analysis and decide on or extract the central questions, which we will want to discuss below.

One way to proceed in that direction is to see what kind of countercultural behavior is most incomprehensible and also consider what calls for sociological explanation in our perspective of the relationship of youth and the counter-culture.

Reviewing once more the various aspects of the above described behavior, it can be argued that, (1) the search for greater fulfillment and a more humane life are attitudes that are understandable enough by themselves as a latent longing of most people everywhere. Less understandable is why these attitudes became so manifest, to the exclusion of many other common human aspirations such as possessing personal property, the desire for being active, etc. (2) The same can be said about the anti-work ethic. The fact that some people give up work in society in order to continue in another way, like the people who enter the religious convent life, needs no explanation, because it constitutes a familiar if uncommon pattern of living. In the above case, explanation is needed as to why it occurred in the unusual context of dissent against society. (3) Similarly, the use of drugs is comprehensible in itself as a kind of deviance from the behavioral norm, and can be explained simply as an instance of contagion through which more and more youth become addicted as a result of association with drug-using friends. If this was also the case with countercultural youth, drug use became a matter of principle to them and a means of social contradiction. (4) Most in need of explanation seems to be the hippie style of life. Why did the hippies find it convenient, or necessary, to wear outlandish or entirely bizarre costumes and unconventional hairstyles? There existed no equivalent in behavior in society at that time. There are several meanings to style, but the most specific one is that of disregarding or attacking dominant values.⁽⁴⁾ (5) Similarly, very incomprehensible is the hippie mockery of the so-called straight values and conventional mores—some hippies took great delight in the seduction of 'straight' girls (Willis, 1978, 126). Again difficult to understand is that the American religious group reverted to hippie roles and the hippies in England skipped common logic especially in contacts with ordinary citizens. This kind of opposition to society is very different

from other verbal and ironical dissent as well as from other forms of institutionalized disapproval. (6) Lastly, with respect to the Cosmic Libertarians and, *mutatis mutandis*, with respect to other religious movements, it is difficult to understand why they took up extreme countercultural religious praxis instead of less countercultural strands.

Summing up the more and the less readily comprehensible aspects of the countercultural behavior gives us a fairly coherent pattern in that behavior, containing two meanings, unmistakable either to common or to countercultural people. One meaning is that no sufficient satisfaction is found in current social life, so that common activities are abandoned and other activities are engaged in, in order to find greater fulfillment. But if there were no other meaning to countercultural behavior, it would not constitute a very unusual social context. However, the other unmistakable point of social significance is that of radical dissent against society, beginning with their unconventional life style, their identification with the socially unaccepted, the ideological use of drugs, and continuing through mockery of common social values, occasional skipping of logic, and in several cases, turning to very countercultural forms of religious praxis.

The simple pattern of extreme countercultural behavior that here appears, then, is a lack of satisfaction in prevailing social life and a turning to radical social dissent with all one's heart. The double but plain question that remains is: why did this reaction happen and why was it so outrageous in form and content?

Is this conclusion concerning the central questions too simplistic? Let us consider the already encountered opinions. Glock and Bellah thought that the all-encompassing character of protest and wide spread experimentation with alternatives were the general manifestations of the counterculture. Similarly, improvisation was Damrell's key concept in the explanation of countercultural behavior (Damrell, 1978, 13-4, 32, 189). These attitudes are important aspects of the behavior concerned, but precisely in what way and to what extent? Are they the primary aspects of countercultural behavior? What do they reveal for the sociological understanding of countercultural behavior in relation to society as a whole? This seems to me the primary task sociology should undertake. Experimentation and improvisation, for example, seem to have explanatory value only for the concrete group behavior in itself. No direct relation to society is seen. Protest, on the other hand, points toward the wider relationship with society, but it is not easy to concentrate on that relationship exclusively, for a variety of reasons. For instance, protest as a particular quality of behavior is quite relative

as a social reality. The way people get involved in protest and remain engaged is subject to considerable variation according to the strength of the personal urge and/or the impact from outside influences. Or, like experimentation, protest is partly the result of an ongoing process, that begins somewhere, may grow or wither away. Also, protest is itself relative. It supposedly begins with some kind of dissatisfaction, may or may not develop into dissent, or into negative, or positive, or actual opposition. These variations cannot be further investigated here, but they show that the manifestations of protest far exceed intra-personal reactions to social situations. For our present purposes it suffices perhaps to have a term which indicates or suggests the relationship to society more appropriately than those above. "Radical dissent" seems to me to fit the situation better than "protest", for the above reasons and because hippie behavior also conveyed other meanings than protest. At any rate, neither experimentation, nor improvisation, nor protest does constitute the initial phase of counter-cultural behavior. Thus, we have to return to lack of satisfaction, or lack of motivation to take up roles in the established society as the first factor that has to be examined.

This is not to say, however, that lack of motivation is an uncomplicated mental attitude independent of any influences from reference groups or groups one belongs to. Moreover lack of motivation and lack of satisfaction, exist as processes that develop under certain social circumstances and may grow more rapidly as a result of contacts with similarly affected people. However, lack of motivation is a "genuine" attitude in the sense that it comes to exist in individual persons before it is shared by a collectivity. As a process of interaction with society, loss of satisfaction may be activated and stimulated in several ways. I would like to assume, however, that there exists a "genuine" pattern of occurrence. Our problem, then, is how to find evidence for the view that dissatisfaction lies at the origin of countercultural behavior.

Some theoretical evidence may be found by investigating the realities from which people derive their motivations or their sense of basic meaning in life. Presupposed here is the anthropological necessity of meaning.⁽⁵⁾ Likewise presupposed is that the basic meaning in life is related to the establishment of a certain degree of personal autonomy,⁽⁶⁾ or a stable identity, the concrete basis of which is a personally found and socially recognized position in society. If this goal is insufficiently achieved, dissatisfaction and possibly alienation result.

One important context of meaning, as was pointed out by Berger (1974), can

be found in the life plan, the activities engaged in in order to create a career. Life planning, as integrated activity, is the main source of the human identity. It is referred to as "the overarching activity *par excellence*."⁽⁷⁾ Berger does not elaborate this point directly, but he implies that the individual establishes his relationship to society through his life plan. Concretely, by materializing a career, people create *grosso modo* their actual relationships to their fellowmen. Further, the status they achieve is a criterion of evaluation both for themselves and for others. Career and status are the corner stones of their self-confidence and their prestige. It may be added here that the aspect of achievement must be stressed, because it has become an important value in modern society, as touched upon before.

Another context of meaning, in particular in the case of young people, is youthfulness itself. It is psychological as well as social. Most youth in affluent societies remember a childhood without many hardships. They are more or less aware of the fact that not so long ago they were mere children, but now, they have reached the final stage of physical growth, which gives them a feeling of satisfaction. They can engage in more activities than before, and they are able to engage in activities in a more satisfactory way than earlier. This applies to the many kinds of sports and leisure activities that are available to them, and are almost their exclusive prerogative. Moreover, youthfulness has become a very important social value that has even given rise to a whole market of youth culture further enhancing the meaning that may be derived from being young.

One more context of meaning can be found in religious and secular beliefs. Beliefs are meaningful because they are shared and because they give orientation to one's actions. Because beliefs are abstract or theoretical in nature, they are most suitable for sharing. They show enough uniformity to make sharing possible, and leave enough leeway for personal adherence. The aspect of sharing is important to individuals, because, more than the particular content of the beliefs, it constitutes their basic plausibility and the supporting function of human identity.⁽⁸⁾ Stated simply, people are at ease about their outlook on life, because other people believe the same things. Therefore, it does not matter whether the beliefs are religious or secular. Shared religious faith only tends to be stronger, especially when it is experienced in communal worship, which reinforces the sense of belonging.

Beliefs, moreover are orientations of the mind, and therefore stabilizing elements

of identity. By adhering to certain options, one limitates the range of useful meaning, excluding everything that is contradictory to one's faith. In Berger's sociological interpretation, beliefs function as legitimation, defending the subject against anomic or marginal situations such as suffering, evil, and death. He states: "A plausible theodicy [religious legitimation] permits the individual to integrate anomic experiences of his biography into the socially established nomos and its subjective correlate in his own consciousness" (Berger, 1963, 66).

Now, when considering the case of youth, in general it can be said that their chances of achieving a stable identity and a high degree of autonomy are maximal when they score high in all three areas of meaning, and minimal when they score low. Considering the contexts of meaning one by one, we can arrive at the following theoretical implications. First, youth will have a positive relationship to society as a whole if they are reasonably successful in their life plans. In this case, they will be positively related to the adult world because the adult world represents and maintains the goals youth strive for. Youth and the adult society mutually recognize each other, thus establishing the relationship.⁽⁹⁾ Secondly, when young people share belief systems with adults, this, too, will establish a positive relationship with them. This relationship will be stronger in the case of shared religious faith, as argued above. Thirdly, identity-sustaining peer relationships are possible in all three contexts of meaning—the differences cannot concern us here—but they are probably most harmonious when they do not exclude relationships with the adult world. In other words, when only youthfulness and peer relationships are meaningful, when relationships with the adult society virtually cease to exist, because of a definite failure of the life plan, and because of the absence of beliefs shared with adults, there is no other reality left from which to derive meaning. Now, celebration of youth may become the only alternative. In such a situation, it is at least theoretically conceivable that even youth who have enjoyed a "normal" family life drift away into youthful and countercultural quests.

Consequently, the "genuine" pattern of loss of faith in society consists in the progressive weakening of relationships with the adult community, which results in an inability to remain motivated to assume roles in conventional society. What routes are taken, after loss of motivation has occurred, largely depends on the social circumstances of the time concerned.

The remaining question as to why countercultural behavior was so outrageous in form and content becomes less urgent upon completing the foregoing analysis.

While it could have been anticipated that extreme or disastrous behavior need not necessarily have an equally extreme beginning, because behavior and personality exist as processes, in the light of the above analysis it becomes more readily understandable that, when refuge into youth culture has become the only way out, events follow their own logic, and movements take on a dynamic of their own.⁽¹⁰⁾

The fact that the counterculture turned into radical dissent rather than active opposition to society⁽¹¹⁾ may be in part due to the mentality of youth, who have internalized respectable middle-class values, such as the value of being nice to others, the general ideal of Christian love, respect for life, etc.

5. *Summary and Conclusion*

Attempting a secondary study of several countercultural movements and some types of countercultural behavior, I have inquired into the objective and subjective conditions of this behavior and of follow-up movements, with the ultimate goal of improving the sociological understanding of the differential relationships engendered in the process. Why did some youth, mostly from the White middle class, lose their motivation to take up roles in conventional society?

By comparing and analysing the main characteristics of extreme countercultural behavior, I found that lack of motivation and dissent from society were its basic traits. Of these two elements, lack of satisfaction seemed to be the most genuine intrapersonal reaction to society. Subsequently investigating the three main contexts of meaning: the life plan, the experience of being young, and religious or secular beliefs, I found that significant satisfaction would be lacking if a definite failure were to occur in the area of one's life plan, the more so if also uncertainty were to come into play in the area of beliefs. This has apparently been the case with many young people who dropped out of college and who felt compelled to undertake spiritual wanderings, a sure sign of ambiguous spiritual orientation.

In this way I believe myself to have solidified the hypothesis described above, but it needs some readjustment.

(1) The feelings of alienation that I assumed to be the core of the counterculture ought to be understood as dissatisfaction deriving from the loss of social meaning and from weakening of the relationships to the adult world. Alienation also means disintegration. Lack of motivation can equally well be called loss of faith in society. The counterculture, then, in the first instance, is a socio-individual crisis.

(2) In order for a situation to become a widespread social crisis, socio-cultural change is a necessary condition. In other words, a certain amount of socio-cultural change constitutes a particular climate fostering collective dissent. As pointed out by Wuthnow, changes within the value system, not least the accentuation of personal freedom and gratification extending to sex and drugs, seem to be effective on the personal level. The craving for gratification necessarily weakens attitudes of perseverance as well as the work ethic.

From the above analysis, it follows that countercultural behavior and follow-up movements must be seen primarily as *alternatives* to the abandoned conventional performances. Though not an activity in itself, preference for progressive rock music functions as an alternative, too. The same can be said of preference for artistic activities.

Moreover, the concept of alternatives seems to imply more objective explanatory value for the follow-up movements of the counterculture than Bellah's conception of "survival units." Participating in group activities and becoming a member of organized groups reinstates societal relationships from which the individual derives meaning as argued above. The support of a group seems greater than ordinary personal relationships, especially when the group in question provides an alternative spiritual orientation at the same time. This explains why religious movements have been more successful in the aftermath of the hippie movement than other secular or politically oriented groups. For the latter, it is much more difficult to provide a definite orientation many people can easily agree upon.

The main conclusion I would like to draw from the above study concerns the validity of the distinction between the macro-level and micro-level of social phenomena, or in Berger's terminology, between the objective and subjective dimensions of social reality. Countercultural behavior cannot be explained either by intra-individual interaction or by socio-cultural change alone.

NOTES

- (1) One comparative study is presented by Scott (1980). This author describes at length a spiritual growth group and a witchcraft society, and compares the two in several respects, though not very systematically. Using a double column he simply makes a list of the contrasting aspects concerning the following : the background of the members, their motivations and activities, leadership patterns, relationships among the adherents, and their principal attitudes and values.
- (2) The ethnographic materials these typifications are based upon are mainly, but not exclusively, found in Glock, Charles Y. and Bellah, Robert N., (eds), 1976, 5-72, 93-179.
- (3) This is entailed by the primary task of sociology as seen by Berger, 1963, 189, who writes : "...sociology comes time and again on the fundamental question of what it means to be a man

- and what it means to be a man in a particular situation".
- (4) Brake, Mike, 1980, notes that "[Style] expresses a degree of commitment to the subculture, and it indicates membership of a specific subculture which by its very appearance disregards or attacks dominant values," p. 12.
 - (5) See Berger, Peter L., 1967, 31, where we read: "...craving for meaning appears to have the force of instinct."
 - (6) Personal autonomy, strictly considered, is a *contradictio in terminis*, because a totally independent self is inconceivable.
 - (7) Berger, Peter L., 1973, 72. The life plan itself is defined as "the basic context in which knowledge of society is organized in the consciousness of the individual." Ibid., 70.
 - (8) *Ibid.*, 13-37. Here, Berger has dwelt heavily on the nature of society as an ordering of experience, or *nomos*, which is both an objective and a subjective reality.
 - (9) What is most responsible for the loss of social meaning is indeed overly severe competition among a great part of youth from the White middle class. See, e. g., McGill, William J., 1982, 203, 223. McGill, a psychologist and university administrator during those turbulent years, acknowledges that overcrowded universities and narrow minded bureaucratization were a great part of the problems, causing an accumulation of discontent among the students.
 - (10) Berger, Peter L., 1973, 94, "...institutions, once established, develop a dynamic of their own and, in turn, have effects of their own on the level of consciousness".
 - (11) The student movements of the Sixties were not without violence, but they manifested a different kind of protest.

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